RADIO PROGRAMMING IN THE FACE OF TV

Dick Vogl, Program Director, WOI

(The following is an abbreviated version of his talk.)

Basic program-production staffs at WOI are separate. We feel this is the best way to overcome the TV GIANT and preserve our 31-year investment in radio. Radio staff inaugurated a campaign to STAMP OUT TV. This was unsuccessful. TV at the outset, at least, has too much glamour for that. People watch it as long as something wiggles. It has the attraction of a child's new toy. Newspapers give it all kinds of free publicity...the fact that the "story" is about TV makes it "news."

Radio programming within this framework becomes critical. We make it a point (within practical limitations) to offer alternate programs...the old idea which many educational radio stations have used successfully against commercial radio. We try to program a strong "culture" show on radio across from a weak "entertainment" feature on TV.

We let the TV audience know what's offered on radio. Whenever possible we insert a radio promotion spot, calling attention to a specific radio show, on TV ahead of the low-grade television program. For instance: "Tonight 'Ways of Mankind' tells the story of THE BORROWED WIFE over WOI-FM. This program can be heard at 8 o'clock." (This is a pitch for the disgruntled TV audience who would turn the set off at 8 o'clock rather than watch a whodunit.) Similarly, we offer classical music nightly from 0 p.m. to 11 p.m., across from wrestling, boxing, several poor dramatic shows, etc.

We can follow the foregoing practice because we operate both the radio and the TV station. Local conditions will dictate variations on this plan. We continue to capitalize on good music. So far TV has failed to come up with anything that can compete with classical music.

We try to offer GOOD radio drama. Recent RCA announcement that Old Vic is recording all the Shakespeare tragedies on LP is good news for educational radio. Shakespeare lends himself admirably to radio...his sets were limited...his lines told the story. Shakespeare is 85% reading, 15% setting. We continue to promote radio news. We feel radio can do a better job of it that TV...more completely...more quickly....TV news is limited to "All the news that fits our film!" Radio has no such limitations.

Educational radio, "Radio With a Purpose," can compete with TV better than commercial "entertainment" radio. Puck (a comic weekly) recently announced results of survey on impact of TV in major metropolitan market. Two pro-radio results: (1) Radio listening in TV homes is higher among better-educated than among less educated homes, and (2) After two years of TV, a Radio-TV home begins to come back sharply to nighttime radio listening.

Note how network radio is meeting the TV challenge. More drama, more documentary, more experimentation...the sort of thing NAEB has been doing for years! This means greater competition for educational radio, but it also means more people will become awakened to the value of high-class programming.

As given at 1953 National Convention
Norman, Oklahoma
October 31, 1953

Scanned from the National Association of Educational Broadcasters Records
at the Wisconsin Historical Society as part of
"Unlocking the Airwaves: Revitalizing an Early Public and Educational Radio Collection."

A collaboration among the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities,
University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Communication Arts,
and Wisconsin Historical Society.

Supported by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant from
the National Endowment for the Humanities

MITH MARYLAND INSTITUTE FOR TECHNOLOGY IN THE HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WISCONSIN UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE Humanities

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication/collection do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.